

REMARKS

Claims 1-12 were pending and were rejected. Claims 1-7 have been cancelled. New claims 13-22 have been added. The pending claims are now claims 8-22.

Power of Attorney

The November 18, 2003 Office Action was sent to the prior attorney for Assignee. A new power of attorney and change of correspondence address was filed with the Office on May 5, 2003. Copies are attached. Please direct all future correspondence to the undersigned's customer number.

Change of Docket Number

Please change the Attorney Docket number in the Office's records to reflect the present attorney's docket number, i.e., 199-0095US.

Objection to the Abstract

The Examiner objected to the abstract as being more than 150 words. The abstract has been amended herein so that it is now 150 words. Withdrawal of this objection is therefore requested.

Claim Rejections

The Examiner rejected claims 1-6 and 8-12 under § 102(e) as anticipated by U.S. Patent 6,437,818 to Ludwig et al. ("Ludwig"). Claims 1-6 have been cancelled. As discussed below, claims 8-12 each recite at least one limitation not taught or suggested by Ludwig, and are therefore allowable over Ludwig.

Ludwig is drawn to a multimedia conferencing system topologically similar to various systems in the prior art in that multi-point conferencing requires an additional device separate from the multiple conference endpoints involved in the video conference. See, e.g., col. 24, ll. 36-40 ("Multi-party conferencing requires ... the conference bridge manager CBM 64 (FIG. 21) and the conference bridges 36 (Fig. 3)."). Ludwig clearly teaches that multi-point conferencing can only be conducted using these additional

components. Additionally, these components are not controlled by any of the endpoints, but by other additional components. *See, e.g.,* col. 8, ll. 12–14 (“Control of A/V Switching Circuitry 30, conference bridges 35 and WAN gateway 40 in FIG. 3 is provided by MLAN server 60....”); *see also* col. 8, ll. 63–col. 9, l. 8 (explaining that multiple servers and bridges are involved in setting up a multi-point conference and that various aspects of the multi-point conference are controlled by devices other than one of the endpoints).

This is in direct contrast to, claim 8, which recites a method for conducting a conference between near and a plurality of remote endpoints, in which each of the recited steps is performed “at the near conference endpoint.” Thus while claim 8 requires, for example, that the step of “combining the processed audio and video signals with the local audio and video signals” be performed at the near endpoint, Ludwig clearly teaches that video mosaicing and audio mixing are performed by a separate conference bridge. *See* col. 12, ll. 3–7 and ll. 56–59. Because this limitation is neither taught nor suggested by Ludwig, the rejection of claim 8 over Ludwig is improper. Claims 9–12 depend from claim 8 and thus incorporate this limitation as well. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection of claims 8–12 is therefore requested.

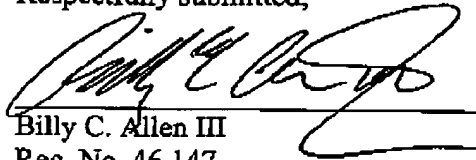
It is also noted that there may be other limitations of claims 8–12 not taught or suggested by Ludwig, however, in view of the above, it is not necessary to address these differences at this time. Failure to address each of these limitations should not be construed as an admission that these limitations are taught or suggested by Ludwig.

The Examiner rejected claim 7 under § 103(a) as obvious over Ludwig in view of U.S. Patent 6,288,739 to Hale et al.. Claim 7 has been cancelled, obviating this rejection.

New Claims

New Claims 13-22 are presented. Support for these claims appears throughout the specification and figures. No new matter has been added by this amendment. Each of these claims is drawn to a video conferencing endpoint capable of providing multi-point video conferencing, which, as noted above, is neither disclosed nor suggested by Ludwig. Allowance of these claims is therefore requested.

Respectfully submitted,



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